

Mass. high court to decide if MIT liable for student suicide

Ruling could create nationwide precedent for suicide prevention

By Patrick Wahl
NEWS EDITOR

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court heard arguments Tuesday concerning whether MIT, along with two Sloan professors and an S3 dean, should be held responsible for the 2009 suicide of PhD student Han Nguyen G. The court's decision could have important repercussions for universities if the Institute is found to be at fault.

Nguyen's advisers and professors, including defendants Drazen Prelec and Birger Wernerfelt, had been aware that the 25-year-old, who jumped from the roof of Building E19, had problems with his mental health. With general exams approaching, Wernerfelt had related in an email to a colleague that "we have pretty much decided to pass him no matter what," according to the plaintiff's filing, which also noted that Wernerfelt had repeatedly mentioned he did not want "blood on his hands" regarding Nguyen's situation.

Though the Sloan faculty passed Nguyen on his general exams, they attempted to convince him to pursue a master's degree

instead of a doctorate. Prelec went on to renege on a promise to write Nguyen a letter of recommendation for a UCLA summer program.

The prosecution's brief went on to state that Wernerfelt "read [Nguyen] the riot act" (verbally lambasted him) by phone at the behest of Prelec minutes before the student committed suicide, over an email the student had sent earlier that day. The email relayed Nguyen's "concerns" about a position he had been offered in the Department of Brain and Cognitive Sciences, to which Prelec "took offense" and which he described in an email to Wernerfelt as "totally out of line."

Nguyen's father Dzung Duy Nguyen brought the suit against MIT in 2011, claiming that Prelec and Wernerfelt, as well as S3 Senior Associate Dean David Randall, were responsible for the wrongful death of his son. It has since been fought and appealed to the state's highest court.

"There has been a profound sea change in thinking about suicide," prosecuting attorney Jeffrey S. Beeler said during his state-

Court, Page 2



MAHI SHAFIULLAH—THE TECH

Vice President of Dean of Student Life Suzy Nelson, center, discusses ways to increase awareness of bias with participants at the Standing up for One MIT event Thursday.

Students talk diversity awareness after swastika found in Simmons

Suggestions include inclusion training for student leaders

By Sharon Chao
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

Simmons residents found a swastika drawn in chalk on a fifth floor hallway wall Oct. 25. MIT campus police classified the incident as a hate crime, according to an email from Head of House Ellen Essigmann to residents.

In response, Vice President and Dean for Student Life Suzy Nelson hosted an event open to the entire MIT community Nov. 3 called Standing up for One MIT. The purpose of the event was to discuss "ways we

can ensure our residence halls, classrooms, and community spaces are places that celebrate kindness, understanding, and respect," according to an email that Nelson sent to the student body.

After Simmons residents reported the swastika to the Simmons House Team and Area Director Kristen Shannon, the Bias Response Team (BRT) conducted an initial assessment and coordinated a response plan. Simmons Head of House John Essigmann informed all residents of the incident in an email the same day. Rabbi Michelle Fisher SM '97

also emailed the Simmons Jewish residents separately, according to Nelson.

In a follow-up email that Ellen Essigmann sent to all residents Oct. 27, she invited residents to a community open house that took place later that day. "A few members of the House Team will be there to listen, to support, and to provide information on where to go to receive additional help," Essigmann wrote in her email.

The MIT police determined that a "timely warning" notice was not

Standing up, Page 2

IN SHORT

There will be no classes Friday due to the Veterans' Day holiday.

Boston University Law School will host a free clinic Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in room E40-160, offering student entrepreneurs legal advice.

Yet again shuttles will replace Red Line service between Kendall/MIT and Park Street this weekend due to construction on the Longfellow Bridge.

Send news and tips to news@tech.mit.edu.



AMY SHIM—THE TECH

Yi Wang G calls her representatives on Wednesday, Nov. 8, in 66-144, urging them to oppose a bill that increases taxes on graduate students as part of a Graduate Student Council event.

Sexual assault in Sigma Chi bathroom reported

Fraternity president says he is not aware of any Sigma Chi members being suspected

By Sheila Baber
ASSOCIATE NEWS EDITOR

The MIT community received a "timely warning" email sent by MIT Police Oct. 20 describing the events of a reported sexual assault incident at the Sigma Chi fraternity house five days earlier. The victim reported that she had been assaulted in the basement bathroom of the house.

The incident at Sigma Chi came as a shock to many, including the members of Sigma Chi. Jack Dulskey '18, president of Sigma Chi, wrote in an email to The Tech that "the incident was not reported to any of our members at the time," and that he "learned about it along with everyone else from the MIT bulletin that went out."

Dulskey wrote, "There were non-Sigma Chi and non-MIT males present in the house that evening. We are not aware of any Sigma Chis being suspects. The police have not shared any other information with us, and that is all we know at this point."

The timely warning email stated that the ongoing case is "being actively investigated by MIT Police [and] at least one other agency." When asked for comments, MIT Police Sergeant Andrew Turco responded in an email that "based on the sensitive nature of sexual assault cases I am very limited in the information I can provide."

Director of Media Relations and Deputy Director of MIT News Office Kimberly Allen wrote in an email to The Tech that "as a general practice, MIT does not comment on ongoing investigations."

"Timely warning" emails like the one sent Oct. 20 are required from university campus police by the Jeanne Clery Disclosure of Campus Security Policy and Campus Crime Statistics Act, commonly known as the Clery Act, signed in 1990 to ensure that members of university communities are informed of threats to campus safety.

Assault, Page 8

MATH & MONSTERS

Play investigates an autistic boy's world as he investigates his dog's death. **ARTS, p. 6**

3 MIT DEGREES ≠ A GOOD SENATE CANDIDATE

Tech staff interviewed MIT alum Shiva Ayyadurai, a Republican candidate for the MA Senate in 2018. Read their analysis of his platform. **OPINION, p. 4**



HAMLET, REVAMPED

Shakespeare Ensemble does what our reviewer's high school English teacher could not: make Hamlet fun. **ARTS, p. 7**

THOR 3: NO MASTERPIECE BUT GOOD FUN

Actors shine in an uneven but exhilarating romp. **ARTS, p. 7**

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WEATHER

The cold never bothered MIT anyway

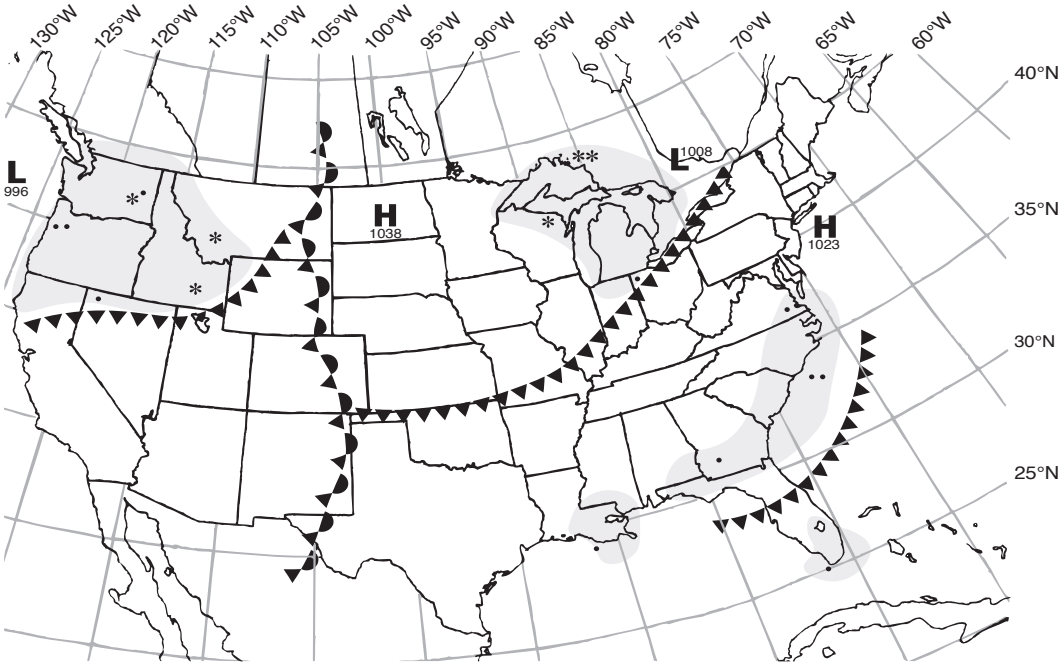
By Lily Dove
STAFF METEOROLOGIST

Is it quickly becoming the time of year when Cambridge reminds us that sweaters were originally designed for survival rather than for style. Break out your scarves, gloves, and hats, for the freezing weather has officially arrived! The weekend is shaping up to be sunny but chilly. No precipitation is forecasted for Boston for the next few days, but other regions of the

United States are already seeing their first snow. On this day in 1996, over 160,000 people in the Great Lakes region were out of power due to an early snow storm. This region is very susceptible to heavy snow due to lake effect snow. Lake effect snow results when cold air moves over warm lake water, rises over the cold air above it, freezes, and precipitates over the land. The storm 21 years ago was one of the most severe early lake effect snow storms on record.

Extended Forecast

Today: Mostly sunny. High 48°F (9°C) with low winds.
Tonight: Clear skies. Low 33°F (1°C).
Tomorrow: Windy and sunny. High 47°F. High 34°F (1°C), low 21°F (-6°C). Winds up to 20 mph from the northwest.
Saturday: Sunny. High 36°F (2°C), low 26°F (-3°C). Winds 5-15 mph from the northwest.
Sunday: Partly cloudy. High 48°F (9°C), low 39°F (4°C). Low winds from the south.



Situation for Noon Eastern Time, Thursday, November 9, 2017

Weather Systems	Weather Fronts	Precipitation Symbols		Other Symbols
High Pressure L Low Pressure Hurricane	Trough Warm Front Cold Front Stationary Front	Snow Shows Light Moderate Heavy Rain	Fog Thunderstorm Haze Compiled by MIT Meteorology Staff and The Tech	

MA universities file brief supporting MIT in Nguyen case

Court, from Page 1

ment. “No longer is [it] viewed as unpreventable.” The stakes extend beyond just MIT: if the court rules in the elder Nguyen’s favor, it could set a state-wide or national precedent that the duty to prevent students from committing suicide extends to university professors and faculty members. A group of 18 Massachusetts universities, including Harvard University and Worcester Polytechnic Institute, filed an amicus brief in support of the defendants. They argued that “unlike clinicians, [professors and faculty] do not have years of graduate education, clinical training, professional experience, and licensure upon which to base judgments about a

student’s mental health,” and that professors overzealously checking on students’ mental health could have a chilling effect on students reporting their issues to actual professionals. Beeler argued that MIT had many opportunities to engage with Nguyen, but “they dropped him” by not encouraging him to return to Mental Health or S3 when his visits were unsuccessful. “You miss the opportunities that these schools have to intervene early in the process” by waiting for “imminent” threats, such as a student about to jump off a building, before taking action, he said. Beeler noted ironically that much of his argument was derived from what MIT and other colleges have said about implementing suicide prevention programs. “Most

of what we’re saying comes from them ... comes from MIT’s Mental Health,” he said. Defense counsel Kevin P. Martin framed his statements around the independence and autonomy that Nguyen had demanded — Nguyen, at 25, was older than most students at MIT, lived off campus, and refused extended treatment from MIT professionals. “Mr. Nguyen’s estate ... is asking for a duty to be imposed that is contrary to what Mr. Nguyen wanted when he was alive,” he said. The plaintiff’s filing stated that Nguyen had visited Student Disability Services, Mental Health, and S3, but found none of them helpful. However, he continually sought psychiatric treatment at nine hospitals, including Massachusetts General Hospital and

McLean Hospital, throughout his time at MIT, which Martin used in support of his argument. The Court asked Martin how it should get past the “blood on his hands” remark a few times during the hearing. Martin responded that there is no evidence Wernerfelt knew of Nguyen’s health problems at the time of the suicide and that the remark in context did not imply that Wernerfelt suspected that Nguyen had suicidal ideations. Both the Court and Martin questioned the prosecution’s demand that professors be tasked with a “duty of reasonable care” for their students, asking if the same duty should be given to parents for their children, employers for their employees, or landlords for their tenants. Beeler responded that the

definition of the duty will depend on future cases. Martin said that between 16 and 18 percent of college students consult mental health services each year, so a duty to care for these students could overwhelm professors and lead to mistaken diagnoses due to high rates of mental illness. “A university should not begin treating a student against their will as if they pose a constant suicide threat,” he said. Beeler recommended that universities require students to authorize them to contact outside professionals if they encounter risk. “Resistance from students ... is common, it happens all the time,” he said. “Schools do what is appropriate to keep them in the system ... [to] keep them alive.”



SARAH WANG
Andrew Ng, Founder of Deeplearning.ai and Co-Chairman and Co-Founder of Coursera gives a presentation Nov. 6 at MIT Stata Center on how AI is beginning to transform every major industry.

UA president Melvin calls for diversity-focused HASS elective

Standing up, from Page 1

necessary. “It has to reach a certain threshold to become a community-wide alert,” Nelson said in a phone interview with *The Tech*. Nelson emailed the Undergraduate Association (UA), Dormitory Council (DormCon), and Graduate Student Council (GSC) leadership a draft of her email about the Standing up for One MIT event Oct. 31. She asked them to revise it and individually sign their names. “I thought it would have far more impact if it were a broader message from the student leaders and me,” Nelson said. UA, DormCon, and GSC leaders were present at the event, where they discussed ideas for combatting hate crimes on campus. DormCon President Yuge Ji ’18 suggested mandating diversity and inclusion training as requirements for student leaders, like those in the UA. Ji later told *The Tech* that she only would support highly encouraged, rather than mandatory, training. “It’s difficult to see how important the training is until after you do

it,” she said. “It’s especially important for student leaders, who are the ones making decisions and communicating with the student body.” UA President Sarah Melvin ’18 agreed with the idea of training for all student leaders. The UA had previously brought MIT’s diversity and inclusion officer Judy “JJ” Jackson to give a talk during their fall retreat, Melvin said in an interview with *The Tech*. Melvin also thought that more academic programs could advocate for diversity and inclusion, such as “a HASS elective focused on learning about different cultures, or a freshman seminar in order to have more dialogue with peers about identity.” UA Vice President Alexa Martin ’19 proposed collaboration among the political clubs. “There’s room for political clubs to work with each other to create events where students are able to talk openly and understand each other’s views better,” Martin said in a phone interview with *The Tech*. The administration has already

taken steps to promote diversity and inclusion. The Academic Council Working Group on Community and Inclusion was formed in December 2015 in response to the sets of recommendations that the Black Students’ Union and Black Graduate Students’ Association published addressing racial and mental health issues. Based on the recommendations, the administration implemented a two-hour diversity program during Freshman Orientation week starting in fall 2016. The Division of Student Life, libraries, and all departments also each developed mission statements about diversity, according to Nelson. Nelson plans to reach out to more students through their living groups. “Even at study breaks, there can be meaningful conversations that bring these issues of bias and prejudice to the broader community,” Nelson said. “This is the responsibility of all of us, not one office. We all have to take the responsibility for change on an individual and collective level.”

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Veteran

Solution, page 8

					8			3
	1			3				4
	3	8	7				2	
		7	3	8		5	4	
	2						6	
	5	3		2	6	8		
	7				2	4	3	
9				5			1	
3			8					

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column, row, and 3 by 3 grid contains exactly one of each of the digits 1 through 9.

Holiday

Solution, page 8

60x		240x			
2		4x		270x	
4-			24x		12x
	11+				
6		2-		3-	
24x			10x		

Instructions: Fill in the grid so that each column and row contains exactly one of each of the numbers 1–6. Follow the mathematical operations for each box.

Here’s the Pitch

by Charles Stack

Solution, page 8

ACROSS

- 1 Be an omen of
- 5 Sharp knocks
- 9 Support, as with a wager
- 14 Numbered musical work
- 15 Polish a manuscript
- 16 Make amends
- 17 Submit one’s ballot
- 19 Sample of food
- 20 Acid neutralizer
- 21 Diplomatic skill
- 23 Lawn material
- 24 Narrate
- 26 Island nation near Sicily
- 28 Concerning this, in legalese
- 30 Motive
- 33 Chimp, for one
- 35 Scouting group
- 37 Garden digging tool
- 38 Woodpecker’s nose
- 40 Buddy
- 41 Apply the brakes
- 42 Underground chambers
- 44 High-fives, for example
- 47 Gallery display

- 48 Catches some Z’s
- 50 Uttered
- 52 Into pieces
- 54 Messes up
- 55 60 Minutes network
- 57 Games with no winner
- 59 The 1990s, for instance
- 63 Celebrity roster
- 65 Display anger
- 67 Scoundrel
- 68 Parade spoiler
- 69 Urge on
- 70 Erstwhile anesthetic
- 71 Finds a sum
- 72 Innumerable years

DOWN

- 1 __ Raton, FL
- 2 Whitish gem
- 3 Twilight
- 4 Many-acre residence
- 5 One expressing contempt
- 6 Fuss
- 7 Actor Brad
- 8 Radiator output

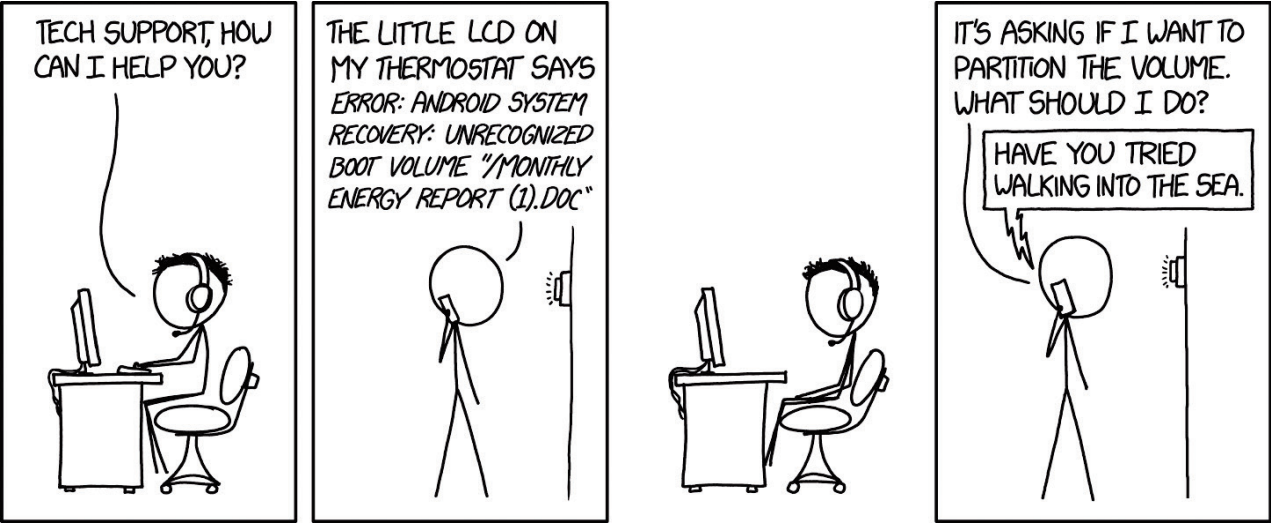
- 9 Military engagements
- 10 Greek vowel
- 11 Prepare lunch, perhaps
- 12 Not fooled by
- 13 Must have
- 18 Fully awake
- 22 Hyundai or Honda
- 25 Stunt flying maneuvers
- 27 Touches on the shoulder
- 28 Express relief
- 29 Young horses
- 31 Scent
- 32 Small salamander
- 33 Reading basics
- 34 Church-bell sound
- 36 Dinner holder
- 39 Don’t throw out
- 43 Produce stray drops
- 45 Forgives
- 46 Scatter around
- 49 __ Lanka
- 51 Avoid capture
- 53 Aquarium fish
- 55 Feel concern
- 56 Ink stain

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8		9	10	11	12	13
14					15					16				
17					18					19				
20							21		22			23		
			24			25		26			27			
			28				29		30				31	32
33	34			35			36		37					
38			39			40					41			
42				43		44			45	46		47		
48					49		50				51			
		52				53		54						
55	56			57			58		59			60	61	62
63			64			65		66						
67						68					69			
70						71					72			

- 58 Type of herring
60 Spherical hairdo
61 Singer Celine
- 62 Approximate takeoff hrs.
64 Novelist Grafton
66 Get __ of (throw out)



[1912] Thermostat



Your problem is so terrible, I worry that, if I help you, I risk drawing the attention of whatever god of technology inflicted it on you.

When systems biology fails to predict the biology of people

The Tech staffers weigh in on their thoughts on Ayyadurai's political beliefs

Shiva Ayyadurai, an MIT alumnus with a BS in EECS, Masters in Animation, Masters in MechE, and PhD in Systems Biology, is a Republican candidate for the 2018 Massachusetts Senate election. Most of the coverage surrounding Ayyadurai thus far has been about his controversies and his interactions with the conservative fringe. We discovered, however, that little writing exists about his actual political views, and decided to sit down with Ayyadurai in September for an interview to gain a better understanding of his political beliefs.

“Clean Government” is the central focus of Ayyadurai’s campaign — he spent much of the interview discussing the roots of his anti-establishment beliefs and criticizing establishment politicians and corporate lobbyists’ power in the government. Ayyadurai calls MIT his political “training ground,” where he first recognized that establishment politicians do not serve the common people. At MIT, he started *The Student*, a newspaper known for its radical anti-establishment views, with Arnold Contreras, head of the Mexican American students’ union and was involved in various other political activities such as the apartheid divestment movement. To this day, he has retained his wariness of career politicians and both the Democratic and Republican parties. Ayyadurai proudly expressed to us, “I’ve never voted since 1983; I’ve never voted,” and explained that he was only running as a Republican candidate to give “the Republicans a chance” and that if they didn’t treat him right, he would do his “own dance.”

Interestingly, however, when we asked Ayyadurai how he wished to “clean up government,” his answer largely involved technology, demonstrating the large influence of his experience within the computer science industry and the far smaller influence of his prior political involvement. Ayyadurai

Another central issue in Ayyadurai's campaign is healthcare, which he refers to as "Real Health" and "Clean Food." Ayyadurai believes that debates should be centered around preventative care rather than insurance or treatment, which he calls "crisis management care." He believes that the main issue with healthcare is that people do not have access to clean foods and exercise plans. Consequently, Ayyadurai believes that the government should focus more on helping the free market develop businesses to sell cheap and healthy food and less on creating or improving healthcare programs such as Medicaid or Medicare. He supports efforts to repeal the Affordable Care Act (ACA) and went as far as to call the policy "garbage," claiming that it "incent[sic] people to get sick" because they know they have the option to receive care after getting sick.

While lifestyle choices are important factors in a person's health, it'd be overly reductionist to assume that lifestyle changes are a sufficient substitute for healthcare policies, or that the two are mutually exclusive. Lifestyle changes cannot cure existing chronic diseases, eliminate the risk of genetic diseases, or help people who need health coverage for other reasons, such as birth control. Ayyadurai's understanding of health at the molecular level does not translate to an understanding of healthcare policy, which is geared towards ensuring widespread accessibility to medical services, and necessitates tackling non-scientific problems such as insurance risk discrimination and government funding.

"Clean Air" refers to Ayyadurai's environmental platform. Ayyadurai believes that the solution to climate change lies in removing barriers to market entry for companies that create environmentally beneficial technologies. Currently, he explains, "There are some amazing technologies out there, but crony capitalism doesn't allow them to reach the market." However, when asked about what policies he would implement to encourage innovation, he avoided giving a clear answer by claiming that there isn't one single policy that could resolve the issue. When asked more specifically

Oddly, Ayyadurai appeared to not have a foreign policy platform. When we asked Ayyadurai what his foreign policy platform was, he did not respond with any specifics, and instead just described his general principles that globalisation and trade are good, while military interventionism is bad.

When asked about more specific topics, such as terrorism, immigration, and North Korean nuclear development, Ayyadurai gave answers that were roundabout, unclear, or contradictory. For example, when asked about his stance on terrorism, he only vaguely claimed that the U.S. should decrease its military interventionism, as it fuels the growth of terror groups. However, he also insisted that the U.S. should increase its vetting practices of immigrants, clearly not seeing the contradiction between his goal to stop provoking terror groups through harsh policies, and his proposed practice of increased vetting.

This lack of a clear foreign policy may be the result of Ayyadurai's focus on science and technology above all else. Foreign policy is an area without clear scientific answers and requires nuanced understanding of political theory, international institutions, and military power, which Ayyadurai seems to lack.

Our interview with Ayyadurai revealed a politician who, by relying too heavily on the free market, science, and technology as solutions, obscures the deeper and much more complex socio-political issues underlying topics a senator must tackle, such as corruption, health care, climate change, social inequality, and foreign policy. We live in a world of rapid innovation, where science and technology can provide useful solutions to our problems, and our governments should make sure to include leaders and policymakers who understand these fields. However, this scientific knowledge must still be combined with an awareness of technology's limits, an understanding of the policy mechanisms that work in conjunction with technology, and an acknowledgement of the broader social forces at stake.

Last week's article about the new dorm stated that Yuge Ji '18 was DormCon Vice President. In fact, she is DormCon President.

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LETTER TO THE EDITOR

In support of a School of Computing at MIT

MIT Turing laureates wrote a letter to the editor in September calling for the establishment of a School of Computing at MIT. EECS Professor Srinivas Devadas responds.

The mission of a School of Computing or an Institute-wide computing initiative should be to understand computing in all its forms, advance computing technology to support engineering, science and the humanities, educate students to be innovators of computing technology, and inform the public in the state-of-the-art of computing.

But what is computing? It means different things to different people. Computer science is the theory, design, and use of machine intelligence, including all types of algorithmic processes. Computing is much more than computer science.

Computing includes developing computational methods to advance the physical

sciences, mathematics, finance, arts, and the humanities. It includes modeling and simulating the world around us so we can understand it better: from hurricanes to black holes, from brains to E. coli. Deriving mathematical or symbolic models may require the computational processing of huge quantities of noisy data from physical phenomena, and these models can then be simulated on modern computers to better understand these physical phenomena. Computational modeling has already revolutionized everything from civil engineering to astronomy and is now essential to the growth of virtually every field of engineering and science.

Computing technology has advanced largely due to the exponential improvements in computational power provided by Moore's Law. To achieve truly intelligent machines, to finely control robots capable of humanoid motion, to accurately predict weather patterns, or to synthesize biological machines, we need to sustain this geometric rate of growth for the next few decades. This will require continued devel-

opment of silicon-based computers, as well as the development of alternate technology platforms, e.g., quantum, biological, or Gallium Nitride, that are dramatically better for specific uses in which silicon computers are currently inadequate. Physicists, material scientists and electrical engineers will need to contribute to this development just as the development of existing silicon substrates required their contributions.

Computing is thus not contained in engineering or science, but has become crucial to the advancement of engineering and science. Moreover, it now impacts fields as varied as economics (see the new 6-14 major) and music technology (see MIT Music and Theater classes) and has recently resulted in the creation of fields such as computational journalism.

To create the next generation of technologists to advance computing in all its forms, we need to start early, i.e., in freshman year, and teach our undergraduates to reason analytically and think computationally. This does not mean that they all need to become expert programmers, though

programming does come easily to analytical and computationally-minded people. Rather, students need to first learn the skills of abstracting away detail from complex systems, inferring properties or rules of a game, and analyze sequences of steps that follow these rules, possibly specified as an algorithm. A more advanced skill is to be able to derive a representation that is a faithful abstraction of a complex system, conforming to its rules of operation. Coding this representation in a programming language allows anyone to harness the power of modern computers to understand, modify or improve the system. Of course, students need significant field-specific skills in order to use computing to advance any particular field.

Structured properly, a School of Computing or an Institute-wide computing initiative focused on education and research in computing technology would prove of great benefit to the Institute.

—Srinivas Devadas
Edwin Sibley Webster Professor of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, CSAIL

OPINION



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The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-time will make you revisit your notion of love, care, and disorders

When you go to a play about an autistic child, you might expect that it would be socially awkward and that the dialog would not be very engaging. You might picture a kid sitting on the floor rocking back and forth or doing math intently. What you would probably not imagine is a highly engaging production featuring interpretive dances and an interactive stage. The audience sits on three sides so that the stage fills the center of the room. It is the epicenter of everyone's attention, and the more casual arrangement makes it feel as if you are

The play also deserves praise for staying true to the source material. When Mark Haddon wrote the book, he never explicitly said that Christopher had Asperger's. He did this on purpose because he didn't want the book to be about the fact that Christopher has Asperger's, and for the first 50 pages, I was aware only that Christopher was somewhat unusual. The words "Asperger's" and "autism" have many connotations that Haddon wanted to avoid and did so fairly effectively by not using the words, since he was writing in a medium where words were so incredibly important. Switch to a medium where the visual is everything, and simply not saying "Asperger's" is not enough. It is impossible for the audience not to notice Christopher's behavioral oddities. However, the production did a good job of working around this by pulling the audience directly into Christopher's mind. Although watch-

Curious Incident isn't just a play; it's social commentary as well. In the end, *Curious Incident* is a story about the whole world subtly implying their conviction that Christopher is broken. Instead, the story creates a statement about how the brokenness is

Playing until Nov. 18

all around him. When his society, education system, and even the classic idea of parental love fail him, holding Christopher to a higher standard is almost hypocritical. If you enjoy theater, moral dilemmas, math, and have only a minor beef against faux-British accents, *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time* is a play for you.

Christian McBride sets the baseline for bass

Christian McBride's trio return to Harvard to jazz up Sanders Theater

In the jazz world, Christian McBride has set a standard for jazz bass; his rhythmic, soulful plucking of strings is a sight to behold and a delight to listen to. Joined by pianist Christian Sands and drummer Jerome Jennings, McBride promised a fun night even among the serious, erudite scholars of Harvard, and as he puts it, to help maintain the balance. McBride certainly delivered; we had a great night of jazz music, from more classic jazz to a jazzed-up Stevie Wonder, but best of all, we saw the wide, infectious smiles of the trio.

Drummer Jennings had a few solo parts, impressing the audience with his quick tempo and rhythm, but it's clear he has a good ear for sound; he plays the drums and cymbals with careful attention to the type

Jazz is interesting because it was born with classical influences, yet it actively sheds classical rhythms and harmonies. Intriguing and danceable patterns create wondrous musical harmonies. But technicalities aside, the trio's love for their craft

Sanders Theater

is what wins the audience over. Harvard's campus awaits their return.



Take This.

photo@tech.mit.edu

MOVIE REVIEW

A dead god, blind god, smart god, and angry man all walk into a planet...

Thor: Ragnarok adds Marvel's quirky humor to the Thor movie lineup



COURTESY OF MARVEL STUDIOS

Thor battling Hulk in an arena in the new *Thor: Ragnarok*. Do you really want to miss this? We didn't think so either.

By Leah Yost and Mahi Shafiullah

If there is one thing you can take home from *Thor: Ragnarok*, it's this: identity crisis is not unique to human beings. Sometimes, gods suffer from it as well. Even with such a simple motif, *Thor: Ragnarok* sets itself apart from the first big-budget action-adventure of this fall by reinventing the Thor formula quite elegantly.

Thor: Ragnarok's greatest virtue is that it is a disposable movie in the Marvel cinematic universe. For casual moviegoers, that means you can just watch the next movie in the series without worrying about missing out on something big. That also means that this movie demands to be judged on the pure entertainment value it provides. With an engaging plot and quirky humor that only Marvel can bring to the table, *Thor: Ragnarok* does it quite well.

One major complaint I have about the plot is the lack of development in Hela's (Cate Blanchett) character. As the first primary female antagonist in the recent Marvel lineup, her character had a lot of possible ground to explore. Unfortunately, *Thor: Ragnarok* falls short, and instead creates an

antagonist that is mostly 2.5-dimensional. Even with two major female characters, it also doesn't pass the Bechdel test. Instead, the movie wastes time half-developing Skurge, Hela's sidekick, in a painfully predictable side plot.

One way this movie stood out from the bulk of action-adventures of this decade is via it's soundtracks. *Thor: Ragnarok* abandons the oft-beaten path of pairing battle scenes with uplifting orchestral scores. Instead, it complements its major battle scenes with classic rock 'n' roll in the form of "Immigrant Song" by Led Zeppelin. The references to Norse mythologies in the song adds Easter eggs for those recognizing the music. Overall, the soundtrack followed the '70s theme with synth-pop scores strewn all over it. The soundtrack contributed further to a lightening of the mood — it feels as if the battles are just video game fights with nothing too serious at stake.

Even though the soundtrack complements the fight scenes quite nicely, the fights are a treat to your eyes in their own merit. The mass battle scenes, especially Thor versus Surtur's minions, Hela versus the Asgardian army, and the final battle

against the undead army, have all been choreographed to quite a singular, smooth flow. Although some of the one-on-one fight scenes leave a little more to be expected (I'm looking at you, Loki versus Valkyrie), they are all superseded by the all-out gladiator battle between Hulk and Thor. To be fair, it does belong in Planet Hulk more, but what are Marvel movies good for if these small transgressions aren't allowed? Especially enjoyable throughout the whole movie was Thor's "God of Thunder" moments in battles. Forcing Thor into a fighting style with swords and shields, which is quite unconventional for him, brings out some previously unexplored truly golden moments in *Thor* battle scenes.

Throughout the movie, Chris Hemsworth does an exceptional job playing the lead. Beginning with a light, comedic start, he seems like an older, more matured version of Tom Holland's Spiderman. From there, his transformation into the ruler of Asgard seems natural and appropriately heroic. Both Tom Hiddlestone and Mark Ruffalo leave their marks with the audience through their half-comedic but powerful acting as Loki and Bruce Banner respectively. Finally, Jeff Goldbaum rises above the limits set by his sinister but comic role as the Grandmaster, and comes off as an antagonist to be reckoned with.

An overlay of quirky humor is probably the biggest difference between *Thor: Ragnarok* and previous Thor movies. From the first scene, with Thor swinging on the chain, until the very last one, comic relief never leaves the movie for more than five minutes. Unfortunately, sometimes that also exudes a try-hard vibe. When a \$180 million-budget movie spends five minutes making jokes about the “Devil’s Anus,” it feels really shaky and forced.

The director Taika Waititi did a excellent job depicting each scene for the viewer to feel as if they were in the scene. The camera angle for each battle scene in particular was interesting without leading to obscurity or disorienting camera jumps. However, when a director designs a movie, do they design

★★★★★

Thor: Ragnarok

Directed by Taika Waititi

**Screenplay by Eric
Pearson, Craig Kyle, and
Christopher Yost**

Soundtrack by Mark Mothersbaugh

**Based on the characters
from "Thor" comic book
series by Stan Lee, Larry
Lieber, and Jack Kirby**

Rated PG-13, Now Playing

it for 3D or 2D? Viewing *Thor: Ragnarok* in 3D didn't take anything away from the film, but it also doesn't add any mind-bending effects or scenes that you absolutely need to see. So if you are thinking about watching Thor attempt to save the day on the big screen, save those few extra bucks and don't get the 3D viewing.

Speaking of mind-bending effects, the CGI effects in this movie were parallel to those of any Marvel movie: incredibly good. It certainly seemed that Hela could pull swords out of thin air and the Devil's Anus really spat fire and debris. It wasn't as impressive as, say, the *Rogue One* space battle, but many of the scenes didn't need that kind of impressive effects.

If you're trying to decide whether you should go watch *Thor: Ragnarok* — if you want a stimulating plot or breathtaking acting, this movie might not be for you. But, if you want a few fun hours with a movie chock-full of action and simple jokes that makes you laugh, *Thor: Ragnarok* will definitely not disappoint.

THEATER REVIEW

Hamlet does not condone the use of musical instruments as violence

The Shakespeare Ensemble presents much more in *Hamlet*

Hamlet

**Performed by MIT
Shakespeare Ensemble**

Directed by Damon Krometis

Kresge Little Theater

Runs Nov. 9–11, 8 p.m.

By Mindy Wu

The last time I remember reading *Hamlet* was in a high school classroom, as my fellow classmates and I took turns reading the text aloud as assigned by our English teacher. It was dull; we were not actors, nor were we particularly passionate about reading Shakespeare aloud to fellow sleep-deprived students. This weak impression I had of the play greatly contrasted with The Shakespeare Ensemble's performance: lively, emotional, funny, and viscerally moving at times. Yes, this Shakespeare play does not disappoint: (fake) blood and death abound!

The beginning of the play starts off with a monitor playing news on the fallen state of Denmark. Soon we see the ghost of the former king, Hamlet's father, appear before Horatio, unable to speak of his suffering before disappearing at the break of dawn, as the sunlight temporarily blinds the audi-

ence. By the time our eyesight has recovered, the ghost and his pale visage is gone, and we are left to wonder if he was ever there at all if not for Horatio's confusion and horror. Why has the king appeared, if not for something rotten in the state of Denmark?

We find out soon what has been brewing: Hamlet, already morose and bitter because her uncle Claudius has risen to the throne and married her mother, learns from the ghost that her father was killed by Claudius. Thus, the real meat of the play begins, in which Hamlet struggles with her morality. Tal Scully ('18) does an amazing job portraying the emotional breadth of this complicated, intelligent, and bereaved character, from her erratic bursts of silliness to the dark brooding soliloquies. "To be or not to be," one of the most recognized speeches/soliloquies in Shakespeare, does not disappoint as a riveting contemplation of suicide and the purpose of living. Hamlet's character is complemented by the other characters on stage. From the overbearing and scheming Claudius (Peter Duerst '18) and endearing old Polonius (Sofie Ayala '19), to poor Ophelia (Kate Yee '20) and good Horatio (Robert Thorpe II '18), and even the smaller role of the Gravedigger (Ankur Chavda G), everyone holds a certain charm that captures your attention no matter what the role. The Shakespeare Ensemble is a group of students who love Shakespeare. When students give up hours a night to rehearse, rather than pset or party, you know it's going to be good.



SABRINA CHENG

In a play by the MIT Shakespeare Ensemble, Hamlet (Tal Scully, '18) reveals to Gertrude (Ruth Tweedy, '20) that her brother murdered her late husband.

The play switches from humor to emotion often and quickly in what proved to be a rollercoaster of Hamlet's inner turmoil. Should she be sitting around, doing nothing to avenge her father's death? Should she continue to act insane to all but her closest friend? Or should she take action now, and kill her uncle-father, Claudius? I wasn't expecting to laugh as hard or as often as I did in a play known for its tragic ending. I

don't want to spoil anything about the production, but know that while they don't use musical instruments for violence, they don't hold back on blood!

Damon Krometis, the director of the play, mentions in his profile that he questioned how to approach the most-produced play in the English language. I can say for sure that it was well worth the three hours. Go see *Hamlet*!

Assault, from Page 1

According to the 2017 MIT Annual Security and Fire Safety Report sent out to the MIT community Sept. 29 (also required from campus police by The Clery Act), there were 13 rape cases (including incidents in residences, on campus, off campus, and public properties contiguous to MIT) in 2016, down from 23 cases in 2015. On the other hand, domestic violence had increased from 10 incidents in 2014 and five incidents in 2015 to 13 incidents in 2016.

Many resources for survivors of sexual assault and movements to combat sexual assault are present on campus. In addition to MIT Violence Prevention and Response (VPR), the Title IX Office, and MIT Police, there are various student groups including Peers Leading Education about Sexuality and Speaking Up for Relationship Empowerment (Pleasure) and the Title IX Student Advisory Committee that focus on community outreach and education.



ADRIAN BUTTERWORTH—THE TECH

A US Coast Guard Academy team member shoots the puck towards MIT's goaltender, Bret Lopez's in the Johnson Ice Rink Oct. 3.



JOHNNY BUI—THE TECH

Attendees drink traditional teas at the Tsukimi Festival held at the Stratton Student Center on Oct. 30. Every year, the Japanese Association of MIT organizes the Tsukimi Festival — a traditional party held in Japan to celebrate the coming of fall — to introduce Japanese culture to the MIT community.

(And get reimbursed for your meal!)

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Solution to Veteran

from page 3

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Solution to Holiday

from page 3

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Solution to Here's t'Pitch

from page 3

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e-mail join@tech.mit.edu

